

BOROUGH COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2024

BOROUGH COUNCIL

A meeting of the Borough Council was held on Thursday, 27 June 2024 in the Civic Centre, Ridley Street, Redcar, Yorkshire, TS10 1TD.

PRESENT His Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor N Bendelow), Councillors N Bendelow (Vice-Chair), P Berry, A Brown, B Clarke, P Chaney, J Craven, G Cutler, C Curr, U Earl, M Fairley, T Gray, P Grogan, C Hannaway, I Hart, B Hunt, J Joy, S Kay, K King, T Learoyd, S Martin, C Massey, J McCue, P McInnes, C Morgan, L Myer, G Nightingale, M O'Donoghue, M Ovens, D Powlay, C Quartermain, C Richardson, V Rider, L Rynn, Stuart Smith, B Suthers, J Symon, D Taylor, P Thomson and L White.

OFFICIALS E Dale, B Archer, C Mahoney, S Newton, C Styles, V Wilson and P Winstanley.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were submitted on behalf of Councillors I Attwood, L Robson, A Brook, C Cawley, R Clark, W Davies, K Evans, M Fletcher, N Hargreaves, J Hart, G Jeffery, C Jones, J Lavan, J Neal, A Oliver, L Pallister, C Pugh, P Salvin and J Thompson.

101 **To receive Declarations of Interest.**

Councillor Hannaway declared an interest in all matters relating to Saltburn Food Festival as a financial beneficiary.

102 **To confirm the accuracy of the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2024.**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on the 16 May 2024 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

103 **To note the attendance matrix from the last meeting**

RESOLVED that the attendance matrix be noted.

104 **To receive any Announcements from the Mayor, the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Members.**

The highlight in our borough since we last met was undoubtedly the events to mark the 80th anniversary of the D-Day landings.

The parade and reconstruction were a fitting tribute to the many servicemen and women who served their country with distinction in the largest seaborne operation in history.

They played a crucial role in liberating Western Europe from the Nazis and we will never forget those who took part and particularly those who gave their lives for freedom.

I would like to congratulate and thanks all those involved in such a moving event.

This Saturday, our borough will celebrate Armed Forces Day.

There will be a parade of past and present military personnel on Redcar High Street, stall hosted by military and local charities and entertainment for all the family.

I hope as many people as possible will attend to pay tribute to past and presents servicemen and women.

Our borough was in the national spotlight again last weekend as we hosted British Cycling's National Road Championships.

Elite riders raced through the beautiful towns and countryside of East Cleveland and there was plenty of entertainment for all the family.

The weather was kind to us as well and all this contributed to an event to remember.

It was fantastic to see that both Saltburn and Redcar beaches had once again won prestigious Keep Britain Tidy awards.

The beaches met high standards for cleanliness, safety and water quality.

We know how beautiful our coastline is and the awards demonstrate what a great attraction we are for visitors also.

105 To receive any Announcements from the Managing Director (Head of Paid Service).

There were no announcements from the Managing Director.

106 To consider Questions from the Public for which Notice has been given.

No questions had been received from Members of the Public.

107 To receive Reports from Portfolio Holders.

Report of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Culture.

Councillor Richardson presented a report which gave an update on her portfolio and answered Members' questions in relation to it.

108 To consider Motions.

No motions had been received.

109 **To appoint Members.**

There were no changes to Committees or Outside Bodies to report.

110 **To reply to Questions from Members of the Council.**

Q1. Question from Councillor Kay to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

“A day never passes without my receiving a complaint, or hearing a comment, about the pot-holed state of Stanghow Road, which runs for three miles from the A171 at Lockwood Beck, via Stanghow Village and Lingdale, to Skelton. There are incidents of vehicles swerving to avoid potholes and of others being seriously damaged, resulting in potential claims against this Council. Not to mention the perils to life and limb.

Stanghow Road is due for resurfacing in 2025-26, but this is unacceptably late, considering its parlous state. In answer to my requests the Council has done some minimal pothole filling and patching. But, this work has been totally inadequate when you consider the parlous state of large sections of this dangerous and damaging road.

The engineers have refused to bring the resurfacing work forward, claiming there are other roads in an even worse state. I would like to know where they are.

The current neglect of Stanghow Road is a glaring example of how East Cleveland is constantly neglected when compared with the downtown, western areas of the Borough. The shocking state of Stanghow Road would never be tolerated in Redcar or Greater Eston.

Were he to experience Stanghow Road for himself, I'm sure the Cabinet Member would come to the same conclusion as I, that immediate comprehensive resurfacing is demanded.

Therefore, will the Cabinet Member undertake to take his life in his hands and drive the full length of Stanghow Road, in both directions, from the A171 to Skelton and back, so that he can see and feel for himself that long sections of Stanghow Road should be completely resurfaced without further delay or prevarication?”

Councillor Quartermain replied as follows:-

“The carriageway treatment programme is a data led prioritisation of the entire network. Every road in the borough was surveyed to nationally recognised standards, given a condition rating and ranked worst to best.

The yearly programme was determined from the budget available each year for highway resurfacing, to deal with the roads in the worst condition. Stanghow Road is programmed for resurfacing in the 25/26 programme. It is not in the 24/25 programme because there are other roads in the borough that require intervention first based on the data collected. A list of these roads can be found in the circulated indicative 6-year programme.

Some roads can deteriorate faster than anticipated at which point we would look to review the programme. Engineers have undertaken a further review of Stanghow Road on site in April 2024 and again on the 20 June and determined that the carriageway was in average condition. Some patching work was identified in isolated areas, for which work orders have been raised.

Regular inspections of the network in line with standards will continue, and any safety critical defects will be dealt with when required.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Kay:-

“Will the Cabinet Member do as I ask and drive along it himself, in both directions?”

Councillor Quartermain replied as follows:-

“I did answer that part of your question, I have driven that section of the road many times over, and in recent times, I think the last time was a couple of weeks ago.

“The total length of carriageway that we manage in the Borough is 680km in length.

The worst section of Stanghow Road is ranked number 1632nd on the condition table of the entire network.

The survey rated the road in the green category with a recommendation of some preventative maintenance in the next 3 – 5 years.

The proposed 6 year programme has a total investment of £1.3m in the Lockwood ward with £460k being spent in 24/25. With 4 schemes in 24/25 and 11 schemes in total across the whole programme. I don't think Lockwood has been left out”

Q2. Question from Councillor Grogan to Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.

“On the 26 of March, I received an email informing me that No Mow May was going to happen in a specific area of Kirkleatham Ward along Kirkleatham Lane near the village towards Roseberry Road. I was happy with this to help our little pollinators do their jobs.

But by the end of May it wasn't just Kirkleatham Lane not touched, but Greengates Field, the field behind Ann Charlton Lodge (time of writing on 23 June still not done), the field between Low Farm Drive, Yew Tree Avenue and the Showground is now a meadow! Also not done are the grass verges, kerbs, and paths that have weeds and vegetation growing in some places over 12 inches long, which in places are dangerous and turning into a tripping hazard.

I, like many other members, have been inundated with angry residents wanting to know why their fields that their children play on haven't been cut to play football on, or people are struggling to clean dog mess in the long grass, those same dogs and cats are picking up ticks, and that rats have been seen running through the long grass. This is not only in Kirkleatham but in wards like Eston, Wheatlands, Longbeck, St Germain's, Grangetown and many other wards.

We gave it to Beyond Housing with both barrels last year about this issue and now we are making the same mistake and residents (who pay their hard-earned cash in council tax) are holding us members to account now as they pay for their fields, verges, roads and paths to be clear.

Why aren't the verges and paths being done prior and during May? Why did I receive an email telling me one thing and the council doing another? How much has the council saved in this exercise?"

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

"Streetscene teams have faced a number of challenges this spring, mainly due the unprecedented amount of rain impacting on all areas but most significantly on large open space land. In previous years we have started cutting as early as February but this year due to the weather it was April before our standard grass cutting routes could even be attempted. We have endeavoured to catch up on the programme although this is more difficult now due to the reduction in Streetscene operatives as a result of budget savings agreed in late 2023. We have been able to maintain our standard route in Greater Eston which has allowed resources to be moved to support the other teams. Our experience tells us that with a period of good weather we should be able maintain our 3-weekly route. We appreciate that members are receiving complaints about grass cutting but we will endeavour to catch up as soon as possible.

The team are also due to start our annual Principal Road Maintenance, (A171,174 etc) which requires a significant amount of our resources to complete the work within the allotted road closure time.

As members know we committed this year to No Mow May. At the time we had not anticipated that the weather and reduction in resources would

impact on the catch up till the end of May, however the teams are now making headway.

A survey has been commissioned for the resident's opinion of No Mow May, and serious consideration will be given as to whether to take part in the campaign again. I would say as the Leader of the Council, I will be feeding into that consultation and will be saying it has not gone as well as we thought it would.

Members will also be aware of the council motion to stop the use of pesticide on soft surfaces in support of biodiversity. This has impacted on the look of many areas with grass growing around signposts, bollards, etc. It is proposed to review this approach at the end of the grass cutting season and gain member feedback."

A bit of a perfect storm really, if you are two months late starting because of the weather, and then the pesticides stuff as well. It's all about making sure it improves.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Grogan:-

Obviously, you are saying cuts, how much has the council saved by doing No Mow May? That was one of the questions. I don't think we got an answer to that?

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

I'll get Councillor Brook to get back to you on that.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Grogan:-

Thank you, I understand, we are on the on same patch, we get inundated and I understand we have had a lot of rain, we've had no spring really, Beyond Housing have managed to keep on top of theirs this year, I was surprised after last year's debacle, lot of residents out there that feel like they are stuck in house because we have let grown so long, we've got people who suffer from allergies, that all this extra pollen just starts making things worse for them. It's our responsibility as Corporate Parents to help them and their children to be safe. We need every measure to keep going. For me, the showground should be left as it is and that should be our section of No Mow May, in my opinion it is big enough unless it is going to be used.

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

We learn and I tend to agree on the No Mow May spots, should be on the Showground and not in residential areas. Thank you, I will take the comments board.

Q3. Question from Councillor Grogan to Councillor Brook, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.

“We have some members here today from the Model Boat Club. I was asked by a Kirkleatham resident, who is a member of the Redcar Model Boat Club and who held their own regatta on the 80th anniversary of D-Day (which our town did brilliantly with the Royal British Legion) and was shown with a gauge the water level had dropped to 10 inches (even after winter and all the rain). It should be in the region of 22 inches high for members to use their boats!

I asked on 28 September 2023, in full council, why the boating lake hadn't been filled properly. Your answer was the lake was within the ongoing regeneration works in Coatham and the wider Redcar area (new hotel currently being built and hub on Majuba now complete). You confirmed that the council was actively looking at options in improving the operation and accessibility of the lake, looking to explore commercial uses going forward. You stated that this council doesn't have the revenue in the department to carry out any physical works.

What avenues have you explored and why hasn't the lake got any more water?”

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

“Have spoken to these guys in the past, and it's an ongoing issue because it's so old and the pump costing £10,000 a time and it drags sand through. It seems to have a leak and it is finding out where that leak is. There will be a reallocation of some funds from the Levelling Up money and that will give it a spruce up and that will get done over the coming weeks. Assuming that we get this capital freed up it is very much on our radar and we will get it sorted. The boating lake was filled in the spring with the tides however it does appear that it is not retaining the water level despite the excessive rain, and we suspect there is a leakage somewhere. We are meeting with property services as there will also need to be further work on the pump house to mitigate any further flooding that impacts on the pump. Additionally, both the surface, inlet/outlet pipes need inspection as they are extremely old and probably need extensive maintenance now. We are monitoring the high tide to try to refill over the summer.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Grogan:-

“If there is a leak it needs to be sorted and rectified soon, I've got some information from the Boating Lake Club themselves. The pump was overhauled 2 years ago, at an approximate cost of £7000 but doesn't state if this came from Council or private or whatever, but in the meantime, there used to be a guy who used to go to the pumphouse and

open the valve and there used to be two to three spring tides every month to fill it up. Or give them something that can allow them to do their activities. Councillor Lavan is receiving money for a paddling pool in their ward, I hope you stick to your word to find money for this cause.”

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

“The paddling pool has historical issues and is not like the boating lake. This is on my radar and I have given my word to these gentlemen.

Q4. Question from Councillor Learoyd to Councillor Nightingale, Chair of Corporate Resources and Governance Scrutiny 7 Improvement Committee.

“You have served on the TVCA Overview and Scrutiny committee until May 2019 and then from May 2023 to the present day, in the intervening period you were a director for Teesside airport and the cabinet member for corporate resources here at Redcar and Cleveland. You have a great deal of insight into what happened over this period at both Teesworks and Teesside Airport, through contact with the TVCA and oversight of council accounts, for items such as incoming and outgoing payments.

When put under pressure by then councillor Sue Jeffrey, regarding Teesside Airport, you made a comment to a Local Democracy Reporter on 27 September 2021 calling for greater transparency regarding dealings at Teesside Airport. This is the only provision of information to the public you have seemingly made, despite all the unfolding scandal surrounding TVCA associated ownership deals.

The UK government's Independent Review Report into the TVCA and STDC was published 29 January 2024. One would expect you to have contributed to the review. Why does your name not appear as one of those who submitted evidence?”

Councillor Nightingale replied as follows:-

“I am very grateful to Councillor Learoyd for the question as it gives me the opportunity to clarify the facts regarding number issues regarding TVCA and STDC independent report. First of all the TVCA Scrutiny Committee has no reach whatsoever into the affairs of the STCD. By implication the scrutiny committees in this council have no reach into STDC, and by implication, the Scrutiny Committees of this Council have no reach into the affairs of the STDC either. Second, this concerns the definition of evidence given to the review panel. The review panel report makes quite clear there are two sets of evidence provided to them. Individuals with specific information and specific roles were asked to submit information by the review panel. There were extensive interviews especially face to face, this did not include me. Next, some individuals volunteered information, this did not include me. Third the remit of the

independent review panel is in the report, it tells what the remits are and also there is an appendix 1. I had no evidence to give concerning corruption, wrongdoing or illegality relating to the governance and finances of the TVCA or STDC. Which are the precise issues that the independent review was asked to do by the government.”

Q5. Question from Councillor Thomson to Councillor Brook, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.

“For many years requests have been made to have the Lower Promenade at Saltburn served by a suitable CCTV system to improve safety and deter antisocial behaviour and vandalism. Unfortunately, these requests have not been positively responded to.

Given the many occasions when vandalism and criminal damage have been committed and few if any prosecutions have been forthcoming, and the latest incident when extreme acts of arson and vandalism have been committed, will there now be a firm commitment to use the resources currently available to install an appropriate CCTV system without further delay?”

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

“First of all, I would like to thank the Neighbourhoods team on the timely manner in which they responded to the 8 bins set on fire. Please pass on my thanks to the team.

Unfortunately, the current CCTV system has been limited in its ability to take on new cameras due its age and being an analogue system.

We are presently looking to award a contract for the refurbishment of the CCTV Control room and cameras. This will take the operation from analogue to digital and will offer more flexibility to add in additional temporary and permanent cameras.

Additional cameras will be looked at for Saltburn as part of this process, looking at connectivity and location.

It is accepted that additional CCTV is a valuable crime prevention tool, as well as provide community reassurance, but it should be noted that even when crime and ASB is observed by the CCTV team and relevant data provided to the police, prosecution is not guaranteed.

Also Councillor Thompson, please pass on my thanks to the Fish Shop and a few other local businesses that shared their CCTV on the recent arson attach, thank you.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Thomson:-

“My supplementary is based on the very positive response given by the

Council Leader, and that is to say, Saltburn is being considered as part of the review of a new system and when is that being reviewed? When will it be delivered? I know that you have long pieces of string in your pocket, but I would like some definitive target.”

In the absence of Councillor Brook, Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

“I shall make sure Saltburn is high on that list, and pass onto the neighbourhoods team and budget I will keep my eye on that, it is in the in budget and I shall the Cabinet Member and executive Director to give you an ETA as soon as possible.”

Q6. Question from Councillor Thomson to Councillor Earl, Cabinet Member for Health, Welfare and Housing.

“In December 2023 I asked if Redcar & Cleveland Council would endeavour to become a Stoma Friendly Organisation as soon as possible and to show leadership in the Borough by encouraging all organisations to follow its example. Encouraged by the very positive response from the Cabinet member, it was anticipated that some real progress would have been made in six months. Can members be advised what has been achieved during this period and what remains to be done to achieve the original aspiration?”

Councillor Earl replied as follows:-

“Thank you, Councillor Thomson, I am delighted to give you this update.

An appraisal of the Councils’ accessible public toilets as well as accessible toilets in key front line, public facing buildings has been completed. This survey has established the requirements to improve the facilities set out by Colostomy UK.

The buildings which will have their accessible toilets become stoma friendly are:

- Guisborough Library,
- Duncan Place, Loftus,
- Civic Centre, Redcar,
- Redcar and Cleveland House,
- Seafield House,
- Redcar Beacon,
- All accessible public toilets across the borough.

The installation of the various pieces of equipment including hooks, shelves, mirrors and suitable disposal bins in each of these locations has commenced with the toilets in these buildings to be recognised as being Stoma Friendly by mid-July 2024.

Just before the council meeting I was sent photos as evidence of the stoma friendly facilities at Northgate, Fountain Street and the Lower Promenade.

Once completed signage will be installed indicating these toilets are suitable for stoma users. The Council will also provide an update to Colostomy UK highlighting the important changes Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council have made.

When we have finished that programme, of accessible toilets in council buildings and front facing buildings, the second part of your question is encouraging businesses in our council area to also make their businesses stoma friendly, and we will continue to do that.”

Supplementary Question from Councillor Thomson:-

“Firstly. can I thank the cabinet member for the detail of the response and the positive success that has been achieved and it is good to learn of it. What I would ask is that we ensure that the maximum publicity is given to the facilities, for everyone who possibly could avail themselves for the opportunity of usage and ensure that residents or visitors are fully aware of the facilities. I would like to have some sort timescale for when it would be possible to fully engage with all other organisations within the borough, this could extend within the Borough to the Tees Valley, we are a large family here, I am sure resources could be shared to enable greater availability of such essential facilities.”

Councillor Earl replied as follows:-

“I assure you we will give publicity to this, I have already spoken to the stoma nurse for our area, there is a good stoma network across the Tees Valley. I truly cannot give you a timescale, to get stoma friendly facilities in our local businesses. I can update in due course to what businesses have been approached and what their responses have been to that. I hope that is satisfactory.”

Q7. Question from Councillor Thomson to Councillor Quartermain, Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport.

“On completion of the Cat Nab car park expansion works in 2022 it was envisaged that income would be received by the Council for parking fees for overnight stay. Despite the discussions and the merit of gaining legitimate additional revenue from such fees there has been no implementation of overnight charging. Given that Members have been advised that parking fees are determined by Members and will be implemented after Member discussion, who has taken the decision not to introduce legitimate charging, losing the Council over two years of badly needed revenue?”

Councillor Quartermain replied as follows:-

“There were initial concerns that the introduction of an overnight parking charge at Cat Nab car park could lead to the displacement of campervans into other parts of Saltburn, such as Marine Parade. Following informal consultation and discussions with Ward Members this concern has been allayed to some degree as feedback from campervan owners is that they are willing to pay a reasonable fee to park overnight in the car park.

Unfortunately, there has been some disconnect between the process for approving fees and charges generally, and those for specific car parking issues. However, the proposals for Cat Nab car park can now commence immediately given that there is consensus on the new charges.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Thomson:-

“I am interested in the response from councillor Quartermain, however he did not answer the question I posed. Given the statement that has been given in response to my question, I am very pleased to learn that there is now a positive mindset to allow this policy to be implemented, and therefore my question is, now that we have agreed a mindset, a policy can now be led by members, when can we expect that overnight charging in Catnab car Park will commence?”

Councillor Quartermain replied as follows:-

“The process of introducing new car parking charges is usually quite lengthy, due to the additional processes that need to be followed, such as the amendment to the TRO, the Traffic Regulation Orders, which can require a period of public consultation as you know, and the need to arrange for parking machines to be reprogrammed. Though as soon as possible. I have already sent that into the Director to get that process going.

Q8. Question from Councillor Taylor to Councillor Brown, Leader of the Council.

“A part of Eston is called California after the California gold rush, which is when we discovered iron ore in the hills which then led onto the expansion of British Steel and ICI. That expansion we had led to the wealth we had in the area here on Teesside, which is where my father worked, and my great grandfather worked and was sadly killed there. I might be sitting on this side of the chamber, but I believe Councillors should put the community and the council first before politics.

At a recent public meeting, the Labour parliamentary candidate for the Redcar constituency supported calls for an investigation into Teesworks by The National Audit Office.

Do you and this Labour administration support such a review which will

cost jobs, investment, and put the council's finances at risk?"

Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

"When I first read this question, I thought electioneering scare mongering a week before election day, but then I saw the Councillor it came from. I hold you in high regard and I know your motivation is grass roots so I will give you the benefit of the doubt. To put a bit of context to this and then I will answer you can you tell me which jobs that you think will be in jeopardy if the books were looked into? I have been a part of the TVCA and the STDC for over a year now, I haven't seen anything I would consider to be corrupt or illegal, I have definitely seen private profiteering but, that wheel was invented before I took the seat, but I don't have an issue with that. Just to put a bit of context to this, why do you think that having anybody say your books are absolutely fine will cost any jobs? And then I'll come back"

Supplementary Question from Councillor Taylor:-

"As we can all see the positive impact it is having in the area on jobs with thousands of jobs, already in investment, one that was put at risk when Andy McDonald recently called for an investigation, on a £600 million investment possibly to move to Tyneside, it would stop jobs, it would harm potential investment, possibly for over a year until the National Audit Office review is complete. The land was worth minus £200 million with a review of the project over seven years, for remediation. That cost was set at £500 million. SeAH Wind alone is set to get this council £10 million of business rates set to come next year, NZT are expected to bring 3500 jobs and business rates of £40 million, battery storage facility expected at £20 million by 2027-2028, this council is set to get in over £200 million of business rates. That and a recent conversation I had with you, you expected it to be £7 million. That's given the councils financial future solely dependent on Teesworks, any investigation will pose security and put local services at risk. Is it really what you want as leader of the council, putting politics first over the council and the community? It could even help places out like Saltburn for redevelopment.

Councillor Brown replied as follows:-

"Councillor Taylor I don't like what you are accusing me of, politics before the people. Can you give me one example of the National Audit Office of looking any one persons books, where it's stopped business as usual? Just one example? Of course you can't. Do you think SeAH Wind with its multimillion pound spend, is going to stop, and say we are not doing this anymore, because someone is looking at the books to make public money is spent. I would say if it did have somebody looking at the books, do you agree that the TVCA on that site has had a lot of reputational damage over the last couple of years? It's not just Andy McDonald, its members of the public, members of the public come to the gallery and constantly post all over social media regarding the reputation of the

TVCA and Teesworks. If someone comes in and says these books are fine, which I fully expect them to do, would that not increase investment on to the site because, people that may think there is something wrong with the reputation would come. On these pretences, no we wouldn't back it, what you're saying we wouldn't back jobs to be stopped instantly, and for investment, no we wouldn't, but that's not what happens when they look at the books. The question is misleading.

Q9. Question from Councillor Joy to Councillor Richardson, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods.

"I know spending is at an all-time low with cuts to local government being so scant that we must be absolutely aware that there is a balance to be had about how we spend our money. But, when the libraries consultation plan was implemented, the decision to mandate staff moves from Guisborough library to South Bank library and vice versa seems neither one of spending concerns or public service concerns.

The impact on staff to have to uproot their arrangements is considerable, with travel costs, increased travel time, impact on childcare or caring responsibilities cannot be underestimated.

The impact on the public can be measured by the voices of library hub users who feel the comfort of their usual familiar faces has gone as well as the inevitable yet understandable change in opening hours, as well as the fall out of several groups like toddler rhyme time having to be cancelled due to the change in staff members. Libraries are one of the only public facing services.

If we fail to look after the work life balance of our people and end up with an exodus of staff leaving, it will force an expensive and patchy service while we go through recruitment processes. So what will we be doing to listen to our staff?"

Councillor Richardson replied as follows:-

"It is a different service, it is cut to the bone so when staff are off we have no cover so have to close locations, we know that is a result of the service cuts.

An important factor in the Library Service Review is that it must operate as a service, not as a series of individual, independent library branches. As such, all staff members are expected to be available to work in any location that requires it. Due to the significant reduction in staffing levels, all staff are given a 'home library', the library they would go to if they are not required elsewhere. All staff were communicated with regarding this throughout the review process, and it was reinforced in staff interviews and conversations, that there was a requirement to be flexible to the needs of the service, whether that be location or a duty. All staff

confirmed that this was understood.

Whilst we appreciate the work all staff have done in developing the library they have previously been at any change should be seen as an opportunity to develop other branches and communities. There is an expectation that South Bank Library will have numerous activities and events going on, just as at other libraries do, and all staff will be involved in organising and co-ordinating these. There is great scope and opportunity to grow the offer at South Bank and based on all that has been achieved at Guisborough, it proves staff are well equipped to do this, growing the customer base and in offering events that may not be offered currently.

With regards to cancellation of events in Guisborough Library, it can be confirmed that the children's Rhymetime session is still continuing, on the same day and time as it was previously, and remains very well attended. As this session is now facilitated by different staff there are inevitably slight differences in the new sessions, but we are happy that these fulfil the core aims of a Rhymetime session. It remains interactive, inclusive and provides parents, carers and children the opportunity to enjoy songs, rhymes, rhythm and movement in a fun, free environment."

Supplementary Question from Councillor Joy:-

"I am on board with spreading the service around the borough, my ask is that we just keep listening to staff, it's the people who make to service work, the service doesn't work on its own, my concern is when you lose really valuable staff they are really difficult to replace, so please can we keep listening to staff at appropriate times."

Councillor Richardson replied as follows:-

"Yes of course."

The Mayor thanked Members for their attendance and declared the meeting closed.